

# Check Your Medicines

## Tips for Taking Medicines Safely



**Ask questions if you have doubts or concerns about your medicine.** Ask questions and make sure the answers are clear to you. Choose a pharmacist or doctor you feel comfortable talking with about your health and medicines. Take a relative or friend with you to ask questions and remind you about the answers. Write down the answers if needed.



**Write a list or bring a bag with ALL the medicines you take to your medical appointments.** When visiting the doctor, picking up a prescription at the pharmacy, or going to the hospital for a procedure, be sure to bring along all the medicines that you take. This includes over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Make sure any new medicines that are prescribed are safe to take with your current medicines. Remember to remind your doctor or pharmacist if you are allergic to any drugs.



**Make sure your medicine is what the doctor ordered and know how to take it correctly.** Does the medicine look different than you expected? Does a refill seem different than what you have taken before? Does the medicine seem to be different than what your doctor wrote on your prescription? If something seems wrong, ask the pharmacist to check it. Most errors are first discovered by patients.



**Ask about side effects and what to avoid while taking the medicine.** Read the label and other information that you receive when you get your medicine, including all warnings and dosage information. If there are any words you do not understand, ask your pharmacist or doctor to explain them in plain language.



**Check with your pharmacist or doctor to see whether you need laboratory tests to monitor how your drugs are working.** Make an appointment with your doctor to talk about your tests. Some medicines may affect your liver or other organs and require regular laboratory tests to make sure they aren't causing harmful side effects.

## Taking simple steps could save your life!



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